Auburn and Freckles

MARIE L. MARSH


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BY

MARIE L. MARSH

ILLUSTRATED BY

"BRIGGS"

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TO MY FRIEND
ISABEL GORDON CURTIS

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Auburn and Freckles

CHAPTER I

THE FRECKLED BOY

HE isn't a "Fauntleroy" boy at all — this little friend of mine. His dark red hair is shocky and his nose turns up and his face is freckled. There are two or three holes in his jacket, too, and the seat of his trousers is worn very shiny from contact with an improvised summer toboggan slide which he has built from the barn window to the ground.

It isn't his fault that he has warts. They were wished onto him and he knows the fellow who did it, and he would lick him for it only that he has promised his mother not to fight. He knows a woman who can charm warts off, but he is going to leave his on for a while and then wish them onto a girl he just hates. You

see he confides in me, so I know all about it.

I believe that he is fond of me — he tells me that he is, and the freckled boy isn't apt to lie — but there are a great many people to whom he has an antipathy. He hates girls — all but one — and he thinks that women are fussy and men are cross. He knows a woman who is awfully mean. His kite came down in one of her trees and she refused to let him come into her yard to get it. That was last spring and the kite is there yet. The boy showed me the skeleton of it to-day. It was a bully one, he says, all covered with yellow tissue, and with a red white and blue tail.

His mother doesn't like to have him go barefooted, so he keeps his shoes and stockings on now, but he hates it. He used to take them off and hide them under the barn and go to school the back way, but he wouldn't do such a thing now.

He is afraid of lightning, but that is the only thing that he can think of now that he fears. He wouldn't be a bit afraid to meet a bear; only he'd like to know which kind of a bear it was — for if it were a grizzly he'd kill it, but if it were a rinktum bear he'd catch it and tame

it. Rinktum bears are the kind that men lead around by a chain.

The freckled boy's haymow is a lovely place. He lets the boys whom he likes come up and set there to talk things over. He can't see any difference between sit and set and the other boys can't either. One boy pretended that he could, but none of the rest believed him.

While the boys are in the haymow they talk mostly about what their fathers have done. One boy said that it was so nice and dark up there that it would be a good place to talk about their beaux but the freckled boy says that he is a sissy and wears a ring wished on by a girl and that the boys all hate him. They talk about bears a great deal and some of the boys say they'd be afraid if they met a grizzly, and one boy said he believed he'd run; but that boy is an awful coward, and the freckled boy isn't going to let him come into his haymow any more.

You can learn marvelous things from the freckled boy. He knows all about milk-snakes, for they milk Bob Mill's cow every day, and Bob has almost caught them at it four times. Then there are the hoop-snakes that can take

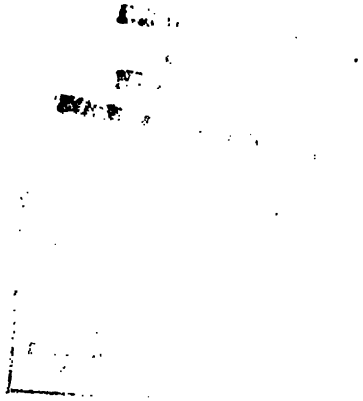
their tails in their mouths and roll like a hoop. The freckled boy saw one once, but it was lying out straight when he saw it. Then there are glass-snakes, too. You can break them into bits and the pieces will run together again and the snake will be as good as new. Glass snakes are harmless, his father says.

The freckled boy just aches to be shipwrecked on a lonely island. He would like to live in the polar regions, for he has heard that the people don't wash themselves up there. He ran away from home once because they insisted upon his taking a bath; but it's hardly fair to tell that, for that happened before his mother was ill. He only wishes me to tell the things he has done since she was ill. He doesn't fight any more, you know. Sometimes he wants to.

He likes summer because you can drink so many things. Ginger ale is his first choice, but sometimes he drinks sody-water. He says he likes sody while he is drinking it, but after he's drunk it he always wishes he'd took root beer.

He is a naturalist — is my friend — and he has a great many beetles and insects in a pasteboard box; but he finds it hard to tell which legs and wings belong to which bug — for they are

AFTER he'd drunk it, he always wished he'd took mead



very dry and crumbly. He has a gopher-skin nailed to his door, and a live turtle in a barrel; and a bumblebee's nest; and a striped snake in a bottle of alcohol. That is the only thing that alcohol is good for, he tells me.

He is very fond of stories, and I tell them to him in the gloaming — all about heroes, and princes, and fairies, and wishes-that-come-true. Last night I asked him what he would choose if he had just one wish, and he snuggled up closer to me and whispered, " I'd wish I would die before ma did."

He doesn't know that I am telling of this, for a moment ago a boy called out to him, " Hi, Jim, there's a big load of watermelons in town " — and he only stopped long enough to give me a hug, then away he ran as fast as his legs could carry him; and as I see him now, stopping at the corner to wave his hat to me, I murmur, " Bless his little red head and his freckled face and his warty hands."

CHAPTER II

BONFIRES

HE has given me leave to write about him, you see. In fact, he thinks that it would be rather fine to be in a book, but he says that I must tell about the other fellows, too, for they wouldn't want to read it if it were just about him.

Books about one boy, the freckled boy tells me, are no good, because who ever heard of just one fellow having fun alone or building barnfires or anything.

The most fun a boy can have, is at a barnfire. The freckled boy says you call them barnfires because you build them near barns. Boys usually build them after elections in the fall, but any time when you feel bully is a good time.

You make them on side streets or alleys. It is more fun if they are near a straw-stack, but the freckled boy's mother has made him promise not to play with fire around stacks any more, so

he doesn't care as much about them as he did. He says that they are no fun in the middle of a big empty lot.

You get bonfires ready in the day time and set fire to them after dark. If any girls see you carrying boards and brush around and ask you what you are doing — you want to say, "Oh, nothin'," and sort of whistle; because if you tell them they will go and tattle and somebody will up and spoil it all. The fellows had a lovely one all ready once and a girl went and told. That is one of the reasons none of the fellows like girls.

Kags are good to put on a bonfire. The freckled boy is not sure that that is their right name, but that is what the fellows call them. They are small barrels and they smell fishy. You find them back of grocery stores.

Sticks of wood do not seem so heavy when you are carrying them to a bonfire as when you are bringing them in for the hired girl. Splinters don't hurt so much, either. The freckled boy says the reason is because you are *having fun.* Why, he ran a long sliver under his nail one night at a bonfire and he never noticed it until school-time the next morning. Then it hurt him

terribly. He had to stay out of school all day and he could not do his chores. Part of the day he carried his arm in a sling.

To make a roaring blaze you should put brush and boards under and then put bar'ls on top. Most of the boys say "bar'ls"; the freckled boy says that it sounds more like the way men talk.

A funny thing about bonfires is that if you are mad at a boy and that boy is helping to get it ready, you forget all about being mad. One time a fellow that the freckled boy was mad at, was pulling at the same root he was, and it came up suddenly and they both sat down awfully hard, but they only just laughed; and after that they weren't mad at all. It has happened just the same way to the other fellows.

The freckled boy says that the reason is because you are hollering all the time. He thinks that you always feel good when you can holler, and when you feel good you aren't mad at anybody.

The biggest boy has the most fun at a bonfire because he bosses it. He doesn't have to work like the rest. He just stands about and shows the boys where to put things. He tells

the boys that it takes a great deal of thinking to manage a fire just right, and he says that thinking is harder work than toting boards.

The freckled boy has confided to me that he never done much thinking, himself, but that it looks easy. Still, if it is anything like remembering, it must be kind of hard, for he never can remember things, especially if he is in a hurry.

After the fire is burned nearly out, the boys run and jump over it. Of course, they know that Johnnie Thompson was crippled for life that way, but they don't intend to fall in. Any boy must be very careless to fall into a fire, the freckled boy thinks.

Sometimes they roast potatoes in the ashes. They taste lovely. Not a bit like those you have at home. You just put salt on them and eat them. You can eat lots more than you can at the table. One of the fellows ate ten, but he was sick the next day and the doctor gave him some awfully nasty medicine. He told the freckled boy that he would almost rather have gone to school, after all.

Some men are mean about letting boys build fires in their alleys. One man came and tramped

a lovely one all out. The boys are going to pay him up, though. They are going to put a ticktack on his window some dark night and frighten him awfully. You do it with a nail and a string.

The boys said it was awfully silly of him to be so cross, because his pig-pen wasn't hurt a bit. It was only just blistered a little. The freckled boy owns, though, that the pigs did squeal pretty loud.

After a bonfire, one is apt to see little spark-holes in a boy's jacket and his trousers are rent and torn; and there is an odor of burnt woolen and leather about him. His hands are blistered and his eyes watery from the smoke and cinders, but he looks happy; and when you ask him if he's had a good time, he says, " You bet! " in a way which leaves no room for doubt.

And when he goes to bed he dreams all night of building bonfires—only in his dreams *he* is the big boy, and the kids are the *other fellows.*

CHAPTER III

THEY SAWED WOOD

NOW, I do not live in the same house with the freckled boy and his family. I live next door, which is almost the same thing, for I see him a dozen times a day, and he and I are very chummy indeed.

He tells me all about himself — the things that he wishes he could do, and the things he does do. Often he tells me what the other fellows are up to, but sometimes I find out for myself.

For instance, I knew that there was something in the wind when I saw Sam hurry through the back yards, climbing fences when the gates were within three feet of him, and giving sundry shrill whistles between his fat fingers as he ran. Fred snatched his cap and started out when he heard the whistling. Of course, he always did. That was a signal (with a large S, if you please) and whichever boy heard it was bound to obey it.

And it so happened that these two came and

crawled under the big lilac bush beneath my window to talk it over, and I will confess that I couldn't resist listening, and this is what I heard.

"You git over there, closter to the house, Fred, I ain't half hid. Somebody'll see my feet stickin' out. Say, I got some bully news. My cousin's baby's got the measles an' us fellers can go an' catch 'em off her, an' then we can stay out o' school."

"How long?"

"Oh, mebby as much as two weeks if we have 'em real hard."

"Don't they hurt?"

"Naw. You jest get red spots all over you an' you have to stay 'round the house an' yer ma'll make toast an' custard an' jelly an' you don't have to do no errands, an' they don't scold you an' you jest have fun."

"Don't you never die of 'em?"

"Die! Naw. I sh'd say not. Die nuthin'! You *can't* die o' measles, 'thought you're grown up er it's black measles."

"Maybe these kind is black measles."

"Oho! they hain't. Baby's got 'em awful

easy. I heard ma say so. But if you don't want to have 'em, you needn't to. I know fellers that 'ud give a nickel for the chance you've got."

"Oh, I dunno but I'd about as lieve. I just hate joggerfy an' spellin'. But ma'd feel awful bad if I die er anything."

"Well, we got to have 'em sometime, an' we better have these kind. Say, ain't that Tom goin' by? Let's call him in."

"Let's. Mebby he's had 'em. Les' us ask him."

"Well, you dassent to give away this snap without he gives us somethin'. I thought of it first."

Tom White, a chubby-faced lad of ten, came into view just then, and I heard the signal from under the lilacs, very softly and cautiously given this time. Tom seemed to know whence it came, for in a moment he was with the others, hauling his long legs in after him so as to be out of sight. Both boys addressed him at once.

"Say, Tom, did y' ever have the measles?"

"Yep, you bet I did an' I don't want 'em again, nuther."

"Did they hurt awful?" asked Fred, cautiously.

"Nope; dunno as they did — only my eyes; but y' see I tried to catch 'em in school time, an' I snuck around all the houses where they had 'em at; an' do you b'lieve I never took 'em till vacation time? Spring vacash, too, an' all the fellers playin' mibs, an' me shut up in the house. No, sir-ee, I don't want no measles in mine."

Sam hastily turned the conversation into other channels then, and the boys talked of drowning-out gophers and hunting birds' eggs until Tom had to go. When he was out of hearing Fred asked: "Say, Sam, are you goin' to catch 'em this late in the term?" and Sam answered dolefully: "Naw, I s'pose 'tain't no use. But I'll tell you what we *can* do. We can saw wood and sprain our backs. I done that once an' it worked bully."

When I noticed the freckled boy working at his mother's wood-pile, shortly after this, with a saw that was quite too large for him, I had my suspicions; but he tells me that sawing wood is the best exercise you can have for the muscle. When he is a man he wants to be the champeen lifter of the world. Indeed, he asked me so

earnestly to feel the little bumps, which by clinching his fists and gritting his teeth, he can raise on either arm, I feel that I may have done him an injustice, after all.

CHAPTER IV

A ROOF PARTY

THE freckled boy's father has been having a new woodshed built in his back yard. It is one of those ugly sheds, high in front and sloping toward the alley behind. Two men have been at work upon it all day, and five small boys have watched and waited impatiently for its completion. Do you think that this eagerness came from a desire to fill the shed with neat piles of wood and kindling? Well, hardly! They have been waiting to *climb* it.

The workmen were both cross and they chased the boys away a dozen times and called various threats to them whenever they got too near, but when it was almost time for them to quit work the boys went and ranged themselves upon the top of a high board fence commanding a good view and they sat there swinging their feet and talking together; and from the cheerful and expectant look upon their dirty

little faces one could see that they expected their inning soon.

When the whistle sounded, the men dropped their tools and put on their coats and hurried off, dinner-pails in hand. Then it was that the boys came *en masse* and with whoops of triumph mounted the shed. They climbed up easily from the alley fence, all but Kidsey; he was too short and had to be boosted and pulled considerably; but once up, he quite made up for it by a variety of shrill whistles and catcalls which showed his delight.

Now, you wouldn't think that there was much that one could do for amusement on the slippery, slanting roof of a small woodshed, would you? But that only shows that you never were a boy. Why, the fun these little fellows got by simply crawling about on their small stomachs all over the bright, clean, splintery boards would last some people a week. Then they all crowed like roosters and flapped their arms like wings, and they let down strings over the edge and they jerked each other's caps and threw them into the next yard, and Tom called and made his little sister get them and hand them back up.

Jamie Reed leaned so far over the edge to

reach for the caps that Tom's sister squealed with fright lest he fall, and Jamie said scornfully, "Oh, that's nuthin'! Watch me now!" And forthwith he hung himself over so far that all the blood in his small body seemed to rush into his naughty red face, and the little girl ran screaming into the house.

Then the other boys tried it, and they made a fringe of small inverted trunks along the front of the shed. Someone proposed hanging by their hands next, and they made another pattern of fringe with their sprawling, kicking legs until Kidsey's hands gave out and he fell to the ground.

Luckily he wasn't hurt, but the tallest boy had to get down to boost him up again, and while the big boy was down, the freckled boy, being host, sent him into the kitchen for apples. The tall boy came out shortly, empty-handed and sheepish, and said that the hired girl wouldn't give him any, and that she had talked sassy to him beside. The freckled boy got down then, himself, muttering that hired girls were mean, ugly, old things, and that he'd get even with this one in particular. When he came back from the

house his pockets were bulging with big red apples, and there was a suspicion of cooky crumbs on his mouth and chin.

The fat boy suggested lying down on the roof to eat the apples and the tall boy proposed that they all save their cores and throw them at the next person who came through the alley. And they stretched themselves out with their saucy snub noses pointing skyward, and they munched the fruit and said what fun it was, and made a promise to meet up there every night after this, rain or shine.

The freckled boy's mother called him to supper then, and they all clambered down, first shying their apple-cores at a yellow cat on a fence two doors off. I heard the freckled boy tell the rest that it will be fun when it rains, for he has a big tarpaulin hid under his back porch and they can spread it over the roof and crawl under that and just lie there and let it rain. So, now, when I see a big tarpaulin spread over the freckled boy's woodshed roof, I will know what it means.

The freckled boy intends to be a carpenter when he is a man. He says that if his mother

or I want any sheds or barns built then, that
can make them for us and save us money.
tells us that he would not think of charging
of his friends full price.

CHAPTER V

DINNY'S MONUMENT

DINNY DONOVAN wasn't, really, one of the other fellows. He was a silly, poor little lad, and the boys used to give him apples and nuts and to take him to ride on their sleds. The freckled boy tells me that he never knew of one of the boys teasing Dinny or doing an unkind thing to him; which speaks well for them.

There are, however, mitigating circumstances about being foolish. The freckled boy has explained them to me. You don't have to run errands; and everybody is kind to you; and when you die you are sure to go to heaven. But when a boy is foolish, it is very hard on his family; and on the whole, the freckled boy is usually glad that he was born with sense.

But all this is neither here nor there. Little Dinny died. There had been a beautiful wake and a big funeral with a white coffin and a lot of candles, and now all this had to be paid for.

White coffins come high and wax candles were something frightful a pound, and apt to be short weight at that; and the Widdy Donovan was having a hard time of it to get herself financially square with the world again. Dennis had been her only son and he had always been a great care to her, for he had been ailing in his head ever since he was a baby; but never was there a more devoted mother than this rough-spoken, tender-hearted Irish woman.

At the wake she had thrown her apron over her head and swayed her body to and fro, moaning, "O Dinny, me darlint! Fwhy did he die! Fwhy did he die!" and her neighbor and friend, Mrs. Maloney, had tried to comfort her.

"Arrah now, Norah, it's better aff he is, poor lad; fwhat with the saftness in his poor little head an' all, it's a sorry toime youse would hev hed a raisin' him at all, at all."

"An' fwhen did youse iver hear me complainin' av the trouble the bye was to me, Mary Maloney? It's yerself hed best look to yer own thavin' set o' byes. Better too *little* wit than too *much* av the same, sez I."

"Whist, Norah, love! It's crazed with the grief that yez are, else ye'd niver be a flingin'

out loike that at yer own thrue Mary. Come, look at the little Dinny! Don't he be loike a little angel, layin' there so paceful an' nate?"

"Indade he do, Mary. Oh, fwhy did he die! fwhy did he die!" Here the rocking and the wail were taken up by the other women, while the men smoked and handed the jug from one to the other with solemn faces and sundry shakes of the head.

Tom Donovan, Dennis' father, had been drowned in the lake, and his body had never been recovered, so that this was really the Widdy Donovan's first funeral, and she laid herself out on it, so to speak.

There was a small white hearse, drawn by white ponies, and Dinny's little friends walked two and two behind it to the grave. They buried him in the little Catholic cemetery at the edge of the town and there were carriages for the mourners, and Dinny's mother wore a veil six inches longer than that of any other woman in the parish; and — well, now she had to pay for it, that's all.

So she worked hard; she washed and ironed; she went out to scrub; she took home mending; she milked cows — in fact she turned her hand

to whatever would bring her an honest penny; for she had a horror of debt, and her creditors were beginning to be pressing in their demands.

But it was slow work. Sometimes she was quite discouraged — then she would think of the funeral and how Father Toomey had read the prayer so loud and clear; and a feeling of pride would come over her, and she would say to herself: "Oh, it's the foine buryin' poor Dinny had, onyhow, an' meself is willin' to wurruk the arrums aff me whin I remember that same."

Now it was not her debts alone that worried the Widdy Donovan. There was something else — and as it was a state of affairs that she could do nothing toward bettering just then, Mary Maloney sensibly advised her to "thry an' forgit it."

But her mind dwelt morbidly upon "poor Dinny, layin' there with niver a cross to mark the spot, no more nor if he lay at the bottom av the lake, loike his poor father."

And so it came that the freckled boy and Tommy Todd — in whose families the Widdy had worked for years — put their heads together and determined that Dennis Donovan should have a cross to mark his last resting place.

Now, it was to be a secret between these two; and they "crossed their hearts" and "hoped to die" and "wished they might be any name" if they ever told it. Thus they bound themselves by the oaths which seemed most sacred in their boyish calendar.

The freckled boy's mother knew that there was a great deal of mysterious work going on in his work-shop; but she respected his secret and never tried to find out what the hammering and sawing all meant. And Tommy Todd's mother knew that whatever the freckled boy's mother allowed the boys to do would be all right; so she went on with her china-painting and never troubled herself any more about it; only she did hope that Tommy was not making her another surprise.

He had made several at different times — a rickety stand, a clumsy bracket or two, and a funny towel-rack with straddling, wabbling legs and a weak back — and she had banished them all to the attic, although she never guessed how hurt Tommy had been to see them go. The freckled boy's mother kept the things that he made, but then she couldn't paint like *his* mother, Tommy had thought, loyally, as he winked hard

to keep from crying and ran out of the house.

Well! The hammering and pounding in the freckled boy's shop finally ceased, and then there was a strong odor of fresh paint through the house, but never a word was said about it, and the boys kept their own counsel.

Then came some very mysterious and suspicious looking actions. Two boys make their way one dark night to the Catholic cemetery, with a pick and a shovel; these they hide under the fence and run on tiptoe back to the freckled boy's barn. Presently they come out, bearing between them some heavy, unwieldy object, wrapped in a great burlap bag. This they succeeded in carrying safely and unobserved to the spot where they have left their tools.

Now they breathe more freely and stop a moment to rest. Then carefully they make their way with the tools and bag to little Dinny's grave. The moon is just peeping out from behind a cloud and throws a weird light on the cold, white headstones, and the shadows of the trees look black and forbidding.

The boys' hearts thump against their ribs, and they can feel the gooseflesh creeping along their shivering little legs. The freckled boy takes

the pick and digs a little, then stops. "Say, Tom, what's that?" he says, dropping the pick. "Nothin', Jim; lemme dig a while"; and Tom makes a few feeble jabs at the hard clay.

"I say, Tom, there *is* somebody; let's us run—"

"No, ye don't, me hearties. Oi've got yez now! A robbin' av graves, was ye? Fwhat's in yer bag here? Begorra! I belave it's a *body.*"

"Oh, Mr. Finn, it's us — me an' Tom — and we was makin' a surprise for Widdy Donovan. She hadn't a cross for Dinny, an' me and Tom made this an'— an'—" Here, overcome by terror and excitement, the freckled boy burst into tears and the two lads threw their arms about one another and sobbed in concert on Dinny's grave.

Just then the moon came out bright and clear, and Mr. Finn opened the bag and discovered a rudely made wooden cross, painted white and lettered in black:

"Dinny Donovan. He was ten years old."

Mr. Finn drew the back of his hand across his eyes and stood with open mouth for a moment, then he laid the cross carefully down on the

little mound, and taking both boys by the hand, he said huskily: "Byes, youse is the bravest and tinderest little chaps in this town, and youse can well be proud of this night's wurruk. But we'll let it go, me byes, till the morrow, thin we can all wurruk wid better hearts and stiddier hands."

Then, together, they walked back home and no word was spoken by either. Of course it all leaked out — their secret — and the boys were the heroes of the hour. "Bless the dear laddybucks, and may the Saints do be them as they done be Dinny!" said Widdy Donovan, putting her arms around both at once. All of which was rather ambiguous, but nobody noticed it and everyone laughed and cried together.

It was not long before a fine white marble cross marked Dennis Donovan's grave. It was purchased by money raised by the boys' fathers, and there was enough over to pay all of Dinny's funeral expenses, too; and the Widdy Donovan, now free from debt, is the most grateful woman in the world.

Tom and the freckled boy watched all the work of chiseling the letters upon Dinny's cross. Old Johnston has promised them that when they

grow up he will teach them how to do it. The freckled boy tells me that after he gets through college he is going to be a tombstone cutter and he expects to have his shop where the marble-yard is now because it is so handy to the cemetery.

CHAPTER VI

UNDER THE WEATHER

THE freckled boy has been stopping indoors with a lame back. His mother tells me that he sprained it in sawing wood. She is sorry to keep him out of school, but he really seems to be suffering considerably and she thinks that he would better keep still for a day or two.

He has been spending the morning with me. For a boy who was in pain, I must say that he bore up remarkably well, but when he went away, I noticed that he limped quite badly as he neared home, so he is doubtless worse again.

He tells me that he is going to have a puppy. That is, if Jamie Reed's dog ever has any more. Jamie has promised him his first pick. He gave Jamie a game of checkers with three men lost, and a horned-toad, for this privilege.

The last time that Jamie's dog had pups,

Jamie had promised thirty-eight, and had taken their value out in trade. As the dog only had three, there was a good deal of feeling against Jamie. Some of the boys made him give back what they had paid; but in most cases, this had been of an edible nature and had disappeared.

Jamie Reed knows a boy whose father used to be in a circus. He showed the freckled boy where this boy lives, and twice the freckled boy saw the man himself.

The boy's father used to take care of the animals. Jamie thinks that he owned a good deal of the circus, but he is not sure. The boy, Jamie knows, has seen the clown with the paint washed off. He says that he looks like anybody else, and that that long nose is false. Some of the boys don't believe this, but the freckled boy does.

The freckled boy knows something else about this boy's father, only he promised Jamie not to tell that to anybody except me. He did not tell me this secret outright. I was left to gather it from this, which he whispered in my ear: "Next time you go to the dime museum and see the Bearded Lady, look at him *clost.*"

The freckled boy did not have a good time at

the children's party Saturday. He had expected to have some fun, but somehow when he got there he hated it. He doesn't care for parties, anyway, because the girls act so silly. Some boys do, too. Dan does. He would have had a better time if Dan had stopped at home. Dan had a pair of long trousers on and he acted so fresh that it made the freckled boy sick. If it hadn't been a party, he believes that he would have licked Dan.

He doesn't care about Dan's talking about his warts, for the fellows all said they wouldn't mind that, but they all said that Dan had no business to walk around, *locked-arms,* with the freckled boy's girl.

Then when they went to supper, the freckled boy had to take an awfully homely girl, because she was the only one he could git. He says git, because he doesn't want the fellows to think he's a dude.

He says that his mother wants him to have a party, but he doesn't want one. They are too much bother. He'd as soon have one if there weren't any girls, and if the fellows wouldn't have to dress up; but his mother says that if they did that, it wouldn't be a party.

The freckled boy has made the acquaintance of a traveling photographer, and if it hadn't been for that unfortunate party, a little girl, who is to take tea with me to-night, would be the possessor of a tintype which now belongs to me. The freckled boy carried twelve pails of water for it, and he swept out the artist's tent to pay for the *extrys*. The *extrys* are a large gold watch chain and a ring, which the photographer painted on afterwards.

I am not to hide this picture, but am to place it conspicuously upon my library mantel. If the little girl does not go in the library herself, I am to send her in for a book — but above all things, I am never to *tell*.

The freckled boy says that photographers make a good deal of money. When he is a man that is what he is going to be.

The freckled boy's father has just gone by. He stopped to tell me that Fred and Sam are laid up with lame backs, too. He says that it seems to be an epidemic.

CHAPTER VII

JOHNNY ADVISES HIS GRANDMOTHER

JOHNNY is the freckled boy's cousin, and although he is but a little shaver, the freckled boy and I have often confided to each other that he is rather wise.

Now there is, as everybody knows, an old saw based upon the utter futility of teaching one's grandmother to suck eggs. It is safe to say, however, that Johnny had never heard it — for Johnny is just seven, and his store of knowledge doesn't run in the line of axioms and proverbs.

In fact, I don't think that you could even make him believe that people call maxims saws. He would say, "Oh, you're tryin' to fool me," if you told him so. John's idea is that the whole end and aim of older people is to fool him. He has deduced this from the photographer's telling him to watch for a mouse to come out of the camera; and the nurse's telling him that the stork brought the baby, and his

father's promising that if he was a good little boy he would take him fishing some day — but all this is neither here nor there.

Now, Johnny has a bad habit of forgetting at times where he is going. He calls it this, but we call it running away.

It actually grieves me to think how often it happens that he doesn't mean to go anywhere, but the first thing he knows, he is in some other boy's yard, or down town, or over by the railroad track, or in some place that he has been forbidden to go.

Well, this time he wasn't paying the proper attention to his environments and when his mother discovered him he was three blocks from home and up on the very top of a great windmill which had been put up beside the warehouse. John had not, himself, discovered that he was there — if we may take his word for it — until his mother called in a loud, frightened voice: "John, come here. Get down from there at once."

John got down, but he gravely told his mother on the way home that she did a risky thing to call so sharply to him when he was up so high. "Why," said he, "what if I'd of

thought that you'd whip me when we got home, I'd of been so scairt that I'd of fell off and then you wouldn't have any little boy any more. I felt sure you wouldn't whip me, mamma, else I wouldn't of come down at all. I can tell when you are going to punish me, an' you ain't going to this time, I know." John's voice had a somewhat forced cheerfulness and his eager eyes scanned his mother's frightened, white face as though he was not so sure of his fate as he pretended to be.

For once Johnny guessed wrong. His mother did whip him, and right soundly, too. Afterward she got a long rope and, fastening one end about his waist, she tied the other to a post of the front piazza and then she brought him a little stool and placed it at his grandmother's feet.

"Now, grandma, you will have to watch him," his mother said. And grandma — dear, sweet grandma, with her soft, white curls and beautiful old face, shook her head gravely and looked reproachfully at the small John, whose face was just as non-committal as a wooden mask.

There was an unbroken silence after his

NOW, *Grandma, you will have to watch him*

mother left, only for the crickets and tree-toads and soft summer sounds, and the gentle breeze swayed the hop-vines with a lazy, waving motion. John did not like silence, and he hated to sit still. He made a rabbit out of his handkerchief, furtively watching his grandmother's face the while.

There was no approval in the mild blue eyes, so he turned his back upon the old lady and made faces at a little girl who was passing. Presently he turned back again and plunged at once into animated conversation.

"Gramma, was you ever up on a windmill?"

"No, John," sternly.

"Well, I shouldn't think you'd want to, you're too old. It wouldn't be safe, gramma, for an' old woman like you to climb up so high."

No response.

"An' gramma, you know that place down by the she-pole —"

"The what?" Grandma's curiosity had betrayed her into speaking.

"Why, the *she-pole*. The place where they wash the sheep, you know, in the creek."

"Oh, yes, I understand."

"Well, gramma, don't you never, never go in

swimmin' down around there. Why, it's so deep it's over my head. An' gramma, there's big fishes there that'll eat you. They don't pay no attention to beefsteak tied on a string, but they eat folks. I know a man that they bit. He showed me the place on his arm."

John moved his stool up a little nearer, here, and he took one of the wrinkled hands in his own and held it caressingly to his cheek. "An' say, gramma, if you chew tobacco it'll make you awful sick. You won't never try it, will you? For I don't want my dear, dear gramma to be sick, or get drownded, er fall off'n a windmill. No, siree! Some boys don't care a bit, but *I* love *my* gramma too much."

The little arms crept around grandma's neck and her soft, white curls drooped down over Johnny's head and hid the young rascal's face completely; but the gold-rimmed glasses were dim and misty, and I hope — I don't say that it was so, mind you, I only hope — that John was crying a bit too.

CHAPTER VIII

A SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

SOMETHING has happened at Jamie Reed's house and now the freckled boy and I are the joint owners of a puppy. The dog is not exactly what I should have chosen as to style and breed, and it was not my idea to keep a dog at all, but the freckled boy's mother said that she simply could not have a puppy about, and that settled it.

Now, I don't pretend to be a connoisseur in dogs, but I can see that this one has his points, and his defects; and for that matter, I should like to see the orphaned puppy that could not in a week's time win its way to the heart of any lonely woman. Beside, I believe in the theory of the Survival of the Fittest.

You see, Jamie's dog is a thoroughbred rat-terrier, and when these puppies came, they were an awfully mongrel lot. Jamie's father said that he already felt responsible for a large portion of the cur population of the town, and

that these pups must be got out of the way, somehow. Each morning he would say this, and then add that he would do it himself, only he hadn't time that morning, and then he would run out of the house with a great show of being hurried. Jamie's mother told me that this thing went on for two weeks and then she determined to attend to the matter herself.

Luckily, Jamie was in the country visiting his grandmother at the time, and I doubt if any one of the other fellows ever had a suspicion of what happened at Jamie's house then.

Jamie's mother told me that when she saw the blinking blue eyes of those puppies looking right into her face, and thought what she had to do, she just sat down and cried. She said that she got a box with a tight lid and some cotton and a bottle of chloroform and sat down on the floor and took the puppies up, one by one, and held them against her face; and they licked her cheek, and the musky breath, peculiar to healthy pups, had such an odor of innocence about it that it went straight to her heart, and she said that she simply couldn't — but she did.

There were three lady puppies and a black one with white spots, and one curly, straw-

colored one. When she saw that one she thought of the probable fact of a yellow dog and felt nerved to her task. She said that it was simply a disgraceful litter and that there was just one which was presentable. Him, she laid to one side; her business was not with such as he.

The old mother dog had gone to forage in the alley and might return at any moment, so Jamie's mother just shut her eyes and took up the pups and laid them on the cotton in the box and poured in the chloroform. Then she tightly closed the box and put it away under a tub in the basement, for Jamie's father to bury in the alley.

When, after a few hours, Jamie's mother stole back to the dog's bed, she heard the cheerful noise of a hungry pup dining, and behold, the very one who was refreshing himself was he who would grow to be a yellow dog.

Jamie came home the next day, and, although nothing was said, his mother saw him prowling about the alley and barn with an air of suspicion. He also looked with distrust and disfavor upon his father for some days, but his mother believes that he has never suspected her part in the affair. Jamie said that he hated to go back

to school because all the boys would be mad at him because the dog only had one pup.

However, any feeling of resentment toward Jamie in this matter quite disappeared the following week when his dog died. It was not entirely sympathy caused by Jamie's loss of a loved pet, and source of considerable income, nor was it quite because of the interesting funeral ceremonies to which the other fellows were bidden, but a sort of combination of both, which made Jamie the boy of the hour.

There was at first some question as to the desirability of allowing girls to attend this function, but all objections were over-ruled when a certain little girl I know, offered to dress the poor little straw-colored orphan in black paper-cambric, as befitted the chief mourner at a dog's funeral. This girl, however, stipulated that she be allowed to hold the pup during the services, this being an office greatly sought upon such occasions.

So, with the puppy in darkest weeds and this girl with a black alpaca apron worn veil-wise down her back, you can easily see that much was added to the pomp and circumstance of the occasion. Then, too, the boys all wore paper-

cambric streamers about their sleeves and the dog was buried in a beautiful box with real handles. The freckled boy says that Jamie's mother sat by the window and watched them and that she cried, too; which touch of sentiment seems to have given especial *éclat* to the ceremonies.

When the freckled boy grows up, he is going to be a Veterinary Surgeon. He says that you can do so much good that way. They had one for Jamie's dog when she was ill. He tells me that some of the fellows have already begun to call him " Doc."

CHAPTER IX

A CHANGE OF BASE

THE freckled boy's family have gone to Europe for a long tour. It was all so sudden and unexpected that even now I can hardly realize that they are thousands of miles away, while the freckled boy and I are trying to become accustomed to living in a strange house in a strange city, and to being left quite to one another's mercy.

For my sister and her husband have gone with the party, and at the last moment, it was decided that the freckled boy and I should come into town and keep their house open during their absence. On the whole, we are rather glad of the chance to experience a little of metropolitan life.

We have been here just a fortnight but we already feel quite domiciled, although we find that we miss the puppy more than we expected to, and the freckled boy is sorry that he gave it back to Jamie Reed before we came away.

The freckled boy knows every policeman in the neighborhood and a lot of the other fellows; and he has by some mysterious means made the housekeeper and the cook his willing slaves. This I infer from the frequency with which we are served with pork tenderloin and watermelon, both of which I abhor.

The freckled boy has really fallen into the lake once, and twice he has been almost arrested for pretending that he was falling in, to frighten some little girls. He has had his fingers bitten by a parrot and his hair pulled by a mischievous monkey. Five times he has lost his hat over the sea-wall, and once, my parasol. From this you will see that we have been to the park.

The freckled boy loves the park. He says that you can learn so much about animals there, and he always insists upon opening his lunch and eating it near the bear's cage. It is neither shady nor grassy there and the odor is not pleasant, but the freckled boy doesn't mind that.

He says that he thinks that two of the bears are rinktum bears and the other is a polo bear. Polo bears can stand a great deal of cold because they come from the polo regions where

there is continuous ice and snow. The freckled boy's teacher told them all about it in school. He wonders how much a bear would cost. If his father will buy him one, he is going to practice being an animal-trainer with that, and then when he grows up he can take the place of the man who is at the park now. The man told him he was getting kind of tired of his job.

The freckled boy has seen the patrol wagon carry away a burglar and he saw them get out a man who was drowned in the lake. He was very white when he came home and I think that the fright has had a wholesome effect upon him, for he has not offered to take me out in a boat nor pretended to fall into the water since.

He said that the policeman was mad because the people let the man drown. The policeman said that they could have saved him if they had half tried, but that now it would probably take two whole hours to fish out the body.

The freckled boy is fond of riding on the street cars. He is chummy with all the motormen and I think that he has set his watch by that of every conductor on the line.

His watch is a noisy one. At first its loud ticking annoyed me, but now that I have grown

accustomed to it, I feel lonely when I do not hear it. The freckled boy begins to wind it when we start out on the car. He sets it at the same time with the conductor's watch. I do not know just what this has to do with it, but I notice that he always glances at the fare-register and reads "out" in a low murmur. It takes about five minutes to wind the watch properly, but people have smiled so much about it that I have asked him to only half wind it at once.

On the return trip he again asks the conductor the exact time, makes a little alteration in the set of the hands, audibly reads "in" from the fare-register and finishes the winding. I have made him promise not to shake the watch and hold it up to his ear each time, and he is trying to remember.

He says that there are a great many things you have to remember *not* to do in the city. Now in the country it is the other way. You have to remember and *do* things there. You have to remember to get in the kindling; and to go after the milk; and to take a clean handkerchief; and to remember when it's Saturday night so as to take your bath; and lots of things.

Here you just have to remember *not* to jump off the cars when they're going; and *not* to shake your watch; and *not* to leave the hot-water faucet open; and *not* to touch the fire alarm. He says it is easier to remember *not* to do things, and he likes the city best.

For all it is so easy to remember about things, the freckled boy managed to get the waste-pipe stopped up with plaster-of-paris before he had been here a week. He was mending a breast-pin for the cook and he mixed the plaster in the wash-bowl and then let it run down the pipe. He says that he never thought. Of course we had to send for the plumber's boy at once, and while he was there the housekeeper had him make some changes in a library gas-fixture which had been giving very poor light.

If you ever have seen a certain popular play, of course you will remember Rats. Well, this plumber's boy was Rats to the letter. The same torn hat and ragged clothes — the same happy-go-lucky disregard of property — in short, the true vandal spirit.

It was just dusk when he was putting the finishing touches on his work in the library. I sat in the back parlor at the piano with the gas

unlit, and in the gathering gloom I could but notice that the tattered Rats was a picturesque object as he bent over his little furnace, now in relief, now in shadow, and now with the ruddy glow on his brown face.

I played idly waltzes, gay gallops and bits of ballad tunes while the freckled boy stood leaning against my shoulder. I think that he was just a bit homesick that night, for pretty soon his arm slipped about my neck and he whispered, "*Play it.*"

I knew what he meant. It was a song that his mother often sang to him. I struck the first chords and in a moment his sweet young voice joined the piano.

> "Hush my babe, lie still and slumber,
> Holy angels guard thy bed."

I looked through the portière at Rats. Totally unconscious of our presence, he was whistling, under his breath an accompaniment to the sweet old air.

> "Heavenly blessings without number,
> Gently falling on thy—"

The freckled boy's voice broke and with a little sob, and he nestled down into my arms.

A great tear rolled down Rats' cheek and dropped with a sizzle on his hot iron. The quick sizz aroused him. Rat-a-tat-tat-*bang,* went his hammer. The freckled boy looked up and smiled a little. The spell was broken.

I lit the gas. Rats was humming " I owe ten dollars to O'Grady," and the light shone brightly upon his face. Had it been all my fancy? No, there was a white streak down his sooty cheek, and somehow I was glad to see it.

The freckled boy saw it, too, and it was an immediate bond of sympathy between them. They talked confidentially for half an hour, and after Rats went away, the freckled boy told me that when he gets a little older, he is going to be a plumber. He says that Rats has promised to teach him his trade.

CHAPTER X

THE CAROUSEL

THE freckled boy teased me for a week to take him to the carousel before I paid any attention to it. He pointed out the place to me every time we passed it on the cars. It is a great low building and the sign in front reads: "Moral Amusement Parlor. Ladies and Children Free."

The freckled boy particularly wished me to notice the latter part of the sign. He said that it didn't cost anything to get in, and that if we didn't like it we would come right away. We went, but we did not come right away. Indeed, I doubt if I could have got the freckled boy away at all if he had not met with an accident.

He loves it, only he doesn't know just what to call it. Some of the children said it was a "Mary go-round" and some called it a "Mary-Andrew." The freckled boy thinks that Mary-

Andrew sounds nicest. None of them call it by the name on the sign, he says.

The freckled boy rode all the time we were there. I sat in one of the chairs and looked on. The calliope played "Hold the Fort," "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and "Marching to Zion,"— all good Sunday School tunes with a stirring ring to them.

I sat next to a fat woman with a double chin, who chewed gum to the music.

"How the children enjoy it," said I, by way of introduction.

"'Deed they do. Them's my two on the camels. I 'd like to try it myself if I wasn't so heavy. Older than me rides. See that old man in the chariot? He's here most of the time. Brings his little granddaughter. That's her in with him."

A mild-faced old gentleman with long white hair sat in one of the gorgeous chariots beside a pretty child in a red cloak. Her thick black locks and his thin white ones floated backward as they rode.

"Now what's the harm in his taking his little kick here with the rest of the children?" continued my fat friend.

"What, indeed?" said I, absently, for I was watching the freckled boy grab frantically for a brass ring which hung at one point of the circuit over the heads and almost out of the reach of the riders.

He missed it, of course. He was riding a small pony at the time, but the next trip he moved over to a giraffe, that having better facilities for reaching.

When you caught the ring, you got a free ride. The freckled boy had paid for fourteen rides before he caught it, which, as I reckoned it, left a fair percentage of profit to the house.

When he caught it, it was not a complete triumph, for in seizing it, he fell forward and bumped his nose, making it bleed so badly that he could not ride again.

However, he told the man to give his ride to a shabby little girl who was crying because she had lost her nickel. In consideration of the fact that the man was sure to find the nickel when he swept, the freckled boy tried to make him give the girl two rides free. I think that he might have prevailed upon the man in the course of time, if it had not been so hard to talk while he was holding his nose. The shabby

girl was grateful, however, and she beamed down on us from the gilt pagoda on the elephant.

I paused to look back as we reached the door. The fat woman winked and pointed with a pudgy finger to the old man. He was seated astride a fierce animal which might have been a lion or a wild boar.

"Onward, Christian Soldiers" the calliope wheezed triumphantly, and onward they went — these young soldiers who were but just beginning, and the old soldier who had nearly finished the fight.

It was grotesque — the old man on his ferocious beast — the fat children on their camels — and the shabby little girl in her golden pagoda. Faster and faster they flew until they became a confused jumble through the yellow dust, and we came away.

The freckled boy has decided that he would rather have a Mary-Andrew than a bear and he is going to write his father to that effect.

CHAPTER XI

A RUNAWAY RING

SINCE the freckled boy has become acquainted with the other fellows in the block, I have been looking the matter up a little and— hello! there they are at it again across the street. Now if you really care for information on the subject I'll tell you what I can see this very moment from my window. It is late and growing quite dusky, and but for my intimate acquaintance with the lot of them I might not be able to make out their dress or their features from here. But bless you, I've watched them before and I know every mother's son of them, and instead of two or three, as you might suppose, there are at least eight boys there — and this is how they do.

First they saunter by on our side of the street in groups of two or three, and I know that they are locating their house. The light is on in the Browns' parlor and they see Mr.

Brown lounging in his easy chair with the evening paper held up before him, and from the cloud of smoke over the top of the paper they know that he is smoking. They take in all the details, you see. Mrs. Brown sits working at her embroidery, and below in their basement their one servant is setting away the dinner things and putting the table to rights, and Smithy calls the boys' attention to all these facts.

Smithy — he's the very worst of the lot, but he's usually pretty shrewd — is the little bullet-headed fellow with the front tooth gone. He lisps a little, but he gets there, and wherever there is mischief brewing you are sure to find Smithy stirring it up. That's him in front, walking with Tommy and the freckled boy; and he says: "Look at ole Who's-This settin' there smokin' his pipe. We'll ring his bell an' make 'im get a move onto himself."

Fred, being less bold, does not stare directly into the house, but glances out of the corner of his eye; and I am pleased to note that the freckled boy looks conscious and a little bit ashamed of himself. "But there's a hired girl in there. She'll come to the door an' he won't git up at all," ventures Fred. But Tommy, al-

ways cheerful, says: "It'll make her mad to come way up them stairs, anyhow, and that'll be 'bout as much fun."

"Ho! you kids is dandies, you are. That there girl won't come up no stairs to answer no bell when she's doin' her dinner-dishes, you kin bet on that. Ole Who's-This will have to go to the door himself, see?" Smithy's sister is a domestic and he knows their foibles.

That is all I can hear, for they have gone by now, but soon they emerge from around the corner and huddle in a vacant lot two doors from Mr. Brown's house. Three of them, Smithy and Tommy, and the black-eyed boy with ragged trousers, come up to the sidewalk; the freckled boy and the others station themselves at intervals along the side of the building, and the one in the rear is the long-legged Perry boy — the one who is such a little dandy and always wears a stiff hat.

Smithy comes crouching and half creeping along and the other boys follow him, stopping behind the steps of the house next to Brown's. Then Smithy, straddling wide and tiptoeing in long strides, comes up the Browns' walk, but just then the servant steps to the window and

lowers the basement shade. Smithy turns and runs; then two boys next him turn and run; and the other five boys turn and run, pell-mell; and the little dandy who is half a block from all danger, runs farther and faster than any of them. There they go, right through the clay and mud-puddles of the empty lot, snickering and laughing, quite out of sight. Realizing that it was a false alarm, they soon come back, however, and take their former places, and after much pantomimic sprawling and many false starts, Smithy really does reach the top step of Brown's house and gives the button a long, hard push; then he jumps over the hand-rail to the grass plot below and then, heavens! how they all scamper.

But to my amazement, Mr. Brown sits there, calm and unruffled, not so much as raising his eyes from his paper. Mrs. Brown does not glance up from her embroidery; while the servant's form is seen shadowed against the window-shade, her arms stretched above her head and her mouth opened in a wide yawn.

For a moment I wonder if from long experience, these people have learned to recognize a runaway ring, then the truth dawns upon me.

They have an electric bell, and, as usual, there is a card beside it saying, "Bell out of order, please knock."

CHAPTER XII

JIMSEY'S MASCOT

WHEN we came to know Tom and Jimsey we made friends at once. They used to call their papers under our window, but now that Jimsey is gone Tom can't bear to come around this way.

Jimsey never had any folks but Tom has one relative, an aunt, whose frequent sprees keep her a great deal of the time in the Bridewell.

The freckled boy scraped an acquaintance with them the first thing, but I never had noticed them particularly until one night when we were returning from the theater and they sat opposite to us on the car.

They had been to the play, too — poor little gallery gods — and with the freckled boy they discussed the merits of the performance.

"De dame wid a red dress was a bird, Jimsey."

"Yes, but de cop was no good. He put on

JIMSEY never had any folks but Tom

too many lugs. Dem kids was all right, dough."

"Wasn't they!" put in the freckled boy.

"Dey was *dat*. I'm sleepy, Jimsey."

"Well, lay yer head here, pardner," and Jimsey put his arm around the little fellow and drew his head down on his shoulder and pretty soon they were both fast asleep.

The freckled boy poked my arm and nodded toward them. Tom's mouth was open and he was snoring gently, while every bob of Jimsey's head took his cap a little further over his nose.

The good-natured conductor evidently knew them, for he touched Jimsey's shoulder when it was time for them to get off, and they stubbed along, half awake, until we lost sight of them in the darkness.

One day Jimsey looked very happy and as I stopped to buy a paper, Tom nudged him saying: "Show it to de lady, Jimsey." Jimsey thrust his dirty little paw into his neck and drew out, inch by inch, with sundry jerks, a long cord to which was attached a pebble with a hole through one end.

"Ah, a lucky stone," said I.

"Yes, lady, it's me mascot. I had bad luck

last week. I felled into a puddle and spoiled me pay-pays and den a bloke shoved a tree-cent piece on me fer a dime and I tot me name was Mud, sure, but I found dis down by de tracks, and now we's all right, ain't we pardner?" Tom beamed assent.

Once after this I asked them if Jimsey's mascot was bringing them luck.

"Yes, lady," said Tom, "we walks on de shady side of de street now, don't we, Jimsey?"

"Dat's what, an' we lives on Easy street."

A hot afternoon in September I was alone in the house, and as I sat sewing at the window I saw Tom run up my doorsteps. Such a white awe-struck little face I saw when I opened the door. "Me pardner is hurted, lady. He felled under de car-wheels an' dey took him to de hospital."

"Which hospital?" asked I, as I snatched up my hat and followed him.

"Cook County, ma'am."

Not another word was spoken, but Tom held my hand so tightly that the rings cut deep into the flesh.

I found when we reached the hospital that Jimsey had been terribly crushed; the amputa-

tion of one leg was necessary, and there was but little hope of his living through it. His face brightened when he saw us. "I'm all right, pardner. I'll pull troo, never you mind. I've got dis. See!" and he held up his lucky stone.

"Jimsey, lad," said I in a shaky voice, "I fear your mascot did not help you this time."

"Oh, yes, lady, if I hadn't had dat, it might av bin bote legs 'stead ov one. I'll get on, somehow. Me pardner will see me troo, won't yer, pardner?"

"I will *dat,* Jimsey," answered Tom, winking hard.

The attendant told me that everything would be done for the little sufferer, but that we must leave him and might come for a few moments the next day.

Tom threw both arms about him and sobbed a minute, then nerving himself bravely he said, "Good-bye," almost calmly. When I bent over to kiss him, Jimsey whispered, "Try an' brace me pardner, lady, he's grievin' awful over dis."

I returned to the hospital the next day. The freckled boy went with me and I could see that

he was terribly agitated and his face was very pale. Leaving him in the reception hall I went straight to Jimsey's cot. Tom was there before me, but we were both too late. "The operation was successful but the patient did not survive the shock," was the report entered upon the hospital books after Jimsey's name.

Tom was kneeling by Jimsey's cot, his little body quivering with silent sobs. "Oh, if I could go wid yer, Jimsey," he hoarsely whispered.

When Tom and I came back, the freckled boy impulsively threw his arms about the poor little chap. "I wisht I could have helped Jimsey," he said brokenly and they sobbed it out together in each other's arms.

I had the body removed to an undertaker's and given a decent burial. Jimsey's pardner, the freckled boy and I were the only mourners. As we rode behind the hearse to the cemetery, Tom told me that he had slipped Jimsey's mascot about his neck as he lay dressed and in his coffin.

"Oh, Tom," I cried.

"Well, he tot it bringed him luck, and I tot

mebby he'd rest better wid it. Did I do wrong, lady?"

"No, dear," said I, putting both my arms about him, "you did just right," and the freckled boy pressed Tom's hand in silent sympathy.

CHAPTER XIII

LITTLE CHARLIE JANE

CHARLIE lives next door and the freckled boy takes a neighborly interest in him and it used to worry him because Charlie's mother would not cut off the little fellow's hair.

The freckled boy often said that Charlie would be all right if they did not make such a girl of him, but those curls dangling down his back made the fellows mad.

Well, all that is over now, for one day last week Charlie started to school; not to kindergarten nor to a select school — they don't count — but to the public school in the great big brick school-house, which had been his Mecca ever since he had been out of dresses.

His first trial had come when he was ascending the high stone steps, timidly, yet proudly, with his book and neat little umbrella tucked tightly under his arm. A dirty boy with a shock of black hair and a pug nose had reached

out and tweaked one of Charlie's long yellow curls as he passed, calling him Sissy, and asking if he brought his nursing-bottle with him.

Then the others took it up, for the spirit of hazing is natural, and they kept it up all day. They spat upon his shining little shoes; they punched him and they pinched him and they asked him whether his name was Sally or Jane; finally declaring that it must be Charlie Jane. They made faces at him, and at last, when school was out, they followed him home, calling out rude rhymes which they improvised for the occasion.

Now, if you know children, you will have noticed that when they wish to tease or taunt one another they invent alliterative and rhyming phrases as naturally as a duck swims; and drawling these in a sing-song tone they attempt to drive the persecuted one to retaliation. Thus it was that Charlie was escorted home to the words of —

"Cheat, cheat, Charlie,
His hair grows snarly."

And—

"Little Charlie Jane
Is afraid of the rain."

Charlie bore himself well. The taunts and insults made his cheeks redden, but he walked on without answering a word. He did not even turn his head, and the mocking procession had dwindled down to two before he reached his home. Right, left, right, left, his tormentors came along at his heels, mimicking his steps until his own gate was reached. Then, turning suddenly, he whacked them soundly with his neat little umbrella and did good battle against the two, who were so surprised by the suddenness of the attack that they soon took to their heels. When Charlie went in to his mamma his neat little umbrella was broken and his face was bruised and bloody, but he felt that he was avenged.

If you could have peeped in at Charlie's window that evening, you would have seen a lad with a swollen nose and a black eye, but with a beaming smile, as, one by one, his long yellow curls were severed from his head by the sharp shears and laid upon the bed.

His mamma did not look happy. There were tears in her eyes, and she turned her head away and winked hard every time the shears closed upon a soft ring. They were all off

at last and they lay in ten little shining piles upon the white spread. Then she put her arms about him and wept softly, but Charlie did not cry, although he answered each loving pressure by a vigorous hug. No, Charlie could not arrange his swollen and discolored little features into anything but a relieved and happy expression, try as he would. And Charlie's papa, coming in just then, glanced scornfully at the golden locks and exclaimed: "Thank heaven, they're off! I've always hated 'em."

When Charlie's mamma picked up the curls to lay them carefully away in silver paper she found but nine, where there should have been ten. She didn't pretend to be a mind-reader — this quiet little woman — but I'll warrant you that she could have gone blindfolded to her husband's vest pocket and put her hand on the tenth of those despised curls. But she said nothing.

After the lad was asleep, his parents stole softly to the bedside, after the manner of doting parents the world over. They looked tenderly down on the little face, with its straw-colored wisps of hair and its swollen, black eye.

"Fine boy!" murmured the father proudly.

"Little angel," whispered the mother. Then, as she bent over him he half opened his eyes and smiled sleepily. "And, mamma, won't you buy me some big boots?" he asked in drowsy tones.

"Why, darling?"

"So I can kick the boys." And Charlie Jane dropped again into childhood's sweet and innocent sleep.

CHAPTER XIV

A. D. T. NO. 340

THE freckled boy has been seeing a great deal of A. D. T. No. 340 of late. That is what it says on his cap and so the fellows all call him that.

The freckled boy says that No. 340 is a very good sly-hand performer. When they are grown, the freckled boy and No. 340 are going to be pardners. They are going to be magicians like Kellar and Hermann and do sly-hand tricks. He says there's big money in it. No. 340 has taught him to do one trick, already. You do it with a penny and a handkerchief. The freckled boy paid a quarter to learn. He never can quite remember how it is done when he tries to show me, but he says it's a bully trick when you do it right.

The other day when with a friend I came around the corner, I encountered No. 340 — I use " encountered " advisedly, for he was just

starting out from the telegraph-office in the drug store with a message, and of course he was on a dead run, and he ran quite into my arms before he looked up. He apologized politely, and as he turned the corner I saw that he slackened his pace and lingered to look in a window or two. I had some errands in the vicinity and we left him gazing at some pictures in the window of a news-store, and in fifteen minutes, when we came back to the same place, we saw him a block farther on playing marbles.

I was very much amused and I proposed to my friend that, as we had nothing to do, it might be entertaining to follow him at his own pace and time him and see when he delivered his message.

The game of marbles delayed him ten minutes, but we kept him in sight, and next he took an inventory of the goods in a bake shop, as he stood with his nose against the window. Then he stopped to play ball with some boys, and it took him some little time to show them a new and superior way of pitching; then he spun a top for a little girl on the sidewalk, and after this he went a little out of his way to look into a livery-stable, and he retraced his steps slow-

THEN he spun a top for a little girl on the sidewalk

ly, stepping on each crack in the board sidewalk; twice he missed and had to begin over again.

Then he threw a stone at a dog, and he ran up an alley and jumped out to frighten some women who came by. Some people were moving from a house which he passed and he stopped to watch them load the furniture and to give some advice about how it should be done.

It was now forty minutes from the time we first met him and I was chuckling to myself and thinking it was very funny, when he turned into the street where I lived. Here he paced leisurely along until he came to within a block of his destination, when he broke into a trot; which was a furious run by the time he reached my own house, and he was in a breathless state when I followed him up the steps.

I opened the telegram addressed to me, and I read: "Have three tickets for matinée. Meet me at White's at 2 p. m. Bring Jim. J. C. E."

I looked at my watch and I saw it was then 2:15 p. m., and somehow the more I thought about it the more I wondered what there was funny about all these paragraphs in the papers

on the subject of the lightning messenger-boys. The freckled boy is extremely angry at No. 340 now. If there is anything that he hates to miss, it is a matinée.

One of the freckled boy's friends has only one leg. His name is Joe. He got hurt by a street car. He couldn't get damages because the conductor had told him not to catch on the car.

The freckled boy tells me that Joe can jump like a grasshopper and that when he hangs his blacking-box and brushes around his neck and uses his crutch as a sort of vaulting-pole, I can bet my life that the boys don't have to wait any for him.

He says that when they cut off Joe's leg they buried it at first in a box that was too small for it, and it hurt so that Joe couldn't sleep or anything; but after a while his father went and dug it up and put it in a big box and now Joe never feels it at all.

The freckled boy often goes through the muddy places purposely to give Joe a job of cleaning his shoes and Joe is very grateful to him. The other day Joe offered him a ticket for a "Grand Masked Ball. Policemen's

Benefit." The freckled boy took it because he thought I might wish to go. Joe found the ticket on the sidewalk.

The fellows all like Joe, and because he is a cripple, they have agreed never to get action on him, no matter what he does. That phrase sounds awfully legal, doesn't it? Reminds one of lawyers and red-taped papers setting forth what the party of the first part has done to the party of the second part, and what the party of the second part proposes to do to get even — or is it the other way around? Well, anyhow, it isn't legal at all — the way I mean it — for it's characteristic of the small boy, and it is, to me, a new and remarkable feature of his code of honor.

The freckled boy has been explaining it to me. I hope I am not more obtuse than the average, but I must confess that it seems a little involved. He says it's like this: "If a boy slaps a boy or knocks his cap off'n his head er kicks him er snatches his mibs er spits on his shoes er pushes him into the mud er any such thing then the boy has got to tell the other boy to quit. Then if the boy don't pay no attention,

the boy tells him again three times, an' if the boy don't quit *then,* why, the boy has got a right to 'get action' on the other boy an' do anything to him."

"Which one has a right?" I asked, bewildered.

"Why, the kid that the other kid done something to first."

"Oh!"

"Yes, don't you see?"

I confessed that it was just a trifle vague, as yet, and the freckled boy illustrated still further.

"Now, it's this way. Tom he stepped on my foot comin' up the steps yesterday. Well, I saw he didn't do it a purpose, so I didn't do nothin'; but if I'd saw he'd done it a purpose, I'd have said, 'You quit that!' three times. Then if he hadn't quit, I could have done anything I wanted to him and he dassent to say nothin'. One boy got action on a boy for pullin' his sister's cat's tail, an' took an' cut his cap all to pieces, an' he didn't dast to say a word. A boy dassent to tell his folks on you, neither, if he lets you get action on him."

And that is how it is. So if your small boy comes in with his eye bruised, or the buttons cut

off his coat, or his cap torn in pieces, and he doesn't say anything about it, you can put it down that he has let some boy "get action" on him and he is living up to the code.

CHAPTER XV

A MODERN ALEXANDER

OF course that isn't his name at all. I am only calling him so here. Indeed, Barney is what the freckled boy calls him, and his sur-name is Dooley, and there are some initials in between — but all this is immaterial just now. The freckled boy has just been telling me about him, and the tale runs in this wise.

Barney has a father, and until a few days ago his father thought that he had a pull. That is, he helped to elect the President and he felt that there should be something coming to him for his vote.

Now, he did not aspire to be sent to the Court of St. James or to Rome, or anything of that sort. In fact, he did not know just what he would ask for, but he knew that something was due him from the county, or the state, or the city, or somewhere, and he was sure that he need only to ask when the time came, and so he waited.

Last Monday an opportunity presented it-

self to demand his right, and he was glad that he had been chary of asking for favor before, for this was for Barney, and was very important.

"It's not for meself, but the bye." He kept thinking this over and over as he stood in the office of the principal of the school bashfully holding his hat in his two hands and shifting from one foot to the other. And let me tell you that nothing but Barney could have induced him to step a foot inside the great brick building, where Barney learned all those facts which filled his father's brain with paralyzing bewilderment.

The very sight of the school-house inspired him with a sort of awe. Had he met the President of the United States face to face he would have grasped his hand confidently and with far less embarrassment than he felt in standing before Barney's principal. For he knew that he had voted for the President, but he was not sure whether he had helped to elect this man or not.

So he stood there, timid and awkward, and at last he stammered out his request — Barney wanted a transfer to another school.

"Certainly." The principal drew a card toward him as he spoke. "Name of pupil, please?"

"Barney Dooley," replied the father, proudly.

"Name of parent. You're his father, I suppose?"

"Yis, sor. Misther Patrick Dooley." This very modestly.

There was some referring to the big register now and a filling in of sundry mysterious looking blank squares, and Mr. Dooley wondered how the man ever could tell what to write and where.

"Your new address, please?" said the principal looking up.

"Fwhat, sor?"

"You are about to remove, are you not? I wish your future address."

Mr. Dooley looked stupidly at the man for a moment. "Raymove? Niver, sor. We'se rinted fer till May nixt."

"What is the trouble then? Is the walk too long for the child?"

"No, just aisy."

"Likes his teacher, does he?"

"Yis, sor."

"Perhaps his progress in his studies is not satisfactory."

No, it was not that, either.

"Why, then, do you wish him transferred? There must be some reason?"

"There do be a rayson," said Mr. Dooley, sagely.

"But what is it? We cannot act upon a mere freak. If there are good and sufficient reasons the transfer can be made, otherwise I must disappoint you."

Mr. Dooley looked out of the window for some seconds in silence, fumbling in the tail of his Sunday coat. Soon the discovery of his pipe there reminded him that this was no dream and inspired him with a certain degree of courage, and he spoke out: "To tell the troot, sor, Barney nades a change. It's not the taycher ner yit the books. It's the byes. Begorra, the lad's got so he kin lick ivry gosoon av thim, an' he do want to thry his hand wid thim wans over in the nixt warrud."

The principal bit his lip as he tore the card across and threw it in the waste basket.

"I am sorry, Mr. Dooley, but I fear that the

board would not recognize that as a sufficient reason for granting a transfer. You will excuse me, but I have other business just now. Good day, sir."

Here Mr. Dooley found himself politely bowed out of the office, and the interview was at an end.

So it is now that Alexander — or more correctly Barney — Dooley is still sighing for more worlds to conquer. As for his father, he is quoted as having made this treasonable utterance:

"Drat the boord! We'se moight as well hov a Raypublican Mayor an' done wid it, begorra."

CHAPTER XVI

ANOTHER FELLOW

IT was a grimy little face — that of the freckled boy's friend, Tommy — with streaks of white down the cheeks where the tears had washed the dirt away. His ragged, soft hat was pulled down over his eyes and the little fellow seemed strangely quiet and subdued.

When he came into the office he did not push the door wide open and wait and jump through just in time to catch the force of the spring which slammed it shut, and then limp across the room as though he were disabled for life.

He did not creep up slyly behind the nervous little stenographer and suddenly cry out "B-O-O!" in a tone which made her jump and strike the per-cent mark where she ought to have made a period. Neither did he insert his malodorous little person like a wedge between the only open window and the chair of the fussy old man who kept books, to the in-

finite disgust of the nostrils of this same fastidious old gentleman. Nor, come to think of it, did he make a face at the head of the firm, behind his back, nor wink at Smith as he passed his desk.

Instead of this he went softly across the room and hung his hat upon its peg, then laid his luncheon — his poor little luncheon of dry bread wrapped in a newspaper — upon the floor beneath it and went and sat down in a far corner of the office, quite alone.

Anyone might have known that something was wrong; but nobody seemed to pay any attention to him. Smith usually noticed him more than the rest, but Smith was deep in a page of figures which required his undivided attention.

There the boy sat for some time, his duties not calling him into action except when sent upon errands by some one of the firm.

"Here, Tommy, you rascal! Take this book and parcel and run over to the bank, and be quick about it. Bring back the book, mind, and don't you let me hear of your stopping to look into a window or you lose your job this day. Do you hear?" It was the head of the

firm who spoke, a gruff but kindly old fellow whose bark was far worse than his bite.

"Yes, sir," came a faint, meek little voice.

Tommy's voice was not ordinarily meek. Even the stenographer looked up.

"Why, lad, what's the matter? Are you ill?" The voice was kind in spite of its harshness.

"No, sir."

"Are you in trouble?"

"No, sir," with a suspiciously snuffly voice.

"Well, well, what's up? Tell me about it, can't you?"

"Yes, sir, it's the baby. She's dead."

"Bless me, no?"

"Yes, sir," after a pause. "We never had a baby die on us before."

"No? That's too bad." It sounded ambiguous but it was kindly meant.

"We ain't never had a funeral in our family either."

"No? Well, well, I declare!"

"We couldn't you know. We ain't none of us ever died before."

"When is baby to be buried?" This very softly.

"This morning at ten o'clock."

"Why, that's *now*."

"Yes, sir."

"Why didn't you stay home this morning?"

"I didn't dast to. You said next time I was late I'd lose my job."

"Well, I'll be —!"

The junior partner remembered the presence of the stenographer and tried to cover the last word by a violent cough, but the head of the firm was oblivious to all save the small tearful lad before him.

"I ain't never seen a funeral, neither. Some boys has seen lots of 'em," continued Tommy.

"Smith," said the boss, turning abruptly, "is there no way of getting Tommy there in a car in time for the services? I'll pay any fines incurred for fast driving?"

"No, sir," said Smith, consulting his watch. "It is now 10:06. It would take an hour to reach the house."

Tommy was touched by this new thoughtfulness. "Never mind," said he, trying to assume an air of cheerfulness, "I seen the coffin, anyhow. And I — I — I kissed baby before I come down," and Tommy gave a great gulp.

"You said I should bring this book back, didn't you?" and the lad picked up the parcel and book and was off in a moment.

The head of the firm took off his glasses and began to wipe them fiercely. "It's touching, by George!" he muttered. "I don't mind the baby's dying. She's better off, no doubt. But to think of that poor little devil's missing the funeral because he was afraid to ask me to let him off. By George, it's tough." And he went over and stood by the window and blew his nose so hard that the window-panes rattled and the tear on the end of the stenographer's nose fell and blotted a dollar-mark completely out.

CHAPTER XVII

A STUDY IN VERACITY

IT was a very loud ring at the door-bell which introduced Philip to us. And he, standing there with his basket of oddly assorted merchandise, was so disproportionately small to the noise which he made, that I laughed out-right when I saw him.

"Dis is Philip," he said, making himself known by the simple announcement.

"I didn't know but what you'd think it was me brudder: he's got de same face as me," he went on, as he spread his wares out upon the carpet. "We bees twins, only he ain't so good a boy as me. I'm a very good boy." This statement was made with such perfect gravity that it carried conviction with it.

"I'm sure you are," I murmured, looking into his earnest brown eyes.

"And I'm pretty smart," continued he, as he hung a pair of red cotton suspenders over one

arm to display them. "I make quite much money some days. To-day," a shade of sadness crept into his wistful little face, and his voice shook a trifle, "I ain't had much luck."

The appeal was irresistible. I bought half his stock on the spot, and the cloud cleared from the tiny face.

"You must be a very kind lady," he said, and somehow I felt him to be a student of character.

Having thus made our acquaintance, Philip came often. He particularly admired me. I looked like his sister, he said.

The freckled boy did not take kindly to Philip. He said that he was too mouthy. So it was I alone who sat it out with Philip and listened to tales of his cruel father, and his mother's hardships, and to accounts of the wicked conduct of his twin, which would have melted a heart of stone. It was true some of his stories had a fishy flavor, but I could sympathize with Philip's struggle with a naturally active imagination.

His small body was not clean, and his clothes had the unmistakable odor of constant wear clinging to their ample folds — for they were miles too big for him.

"Why do you not bathe oftener, Philip?" I asked, sternly, one day. Then came a pitiful tale of fruitless and futile attempts to bathe in the lake, and of cruel policemen who drove him off each time he attempted to perform his ablutions there.

"But your clothes — they smell horribly. Cannot your mother wash them at night?"

"She does wash 'em every night."

"Not your trousers! They cannot have been washed lately," I exclaimed.

"You mean me pants. Dey smell bad, because dey're so old. I have wore dese pants 'leven years."

"Why, Philip, ever since you were a baby?"

"Yessum, I always wear pants very long; two or eight or 'leven years."

"He doesn't comprehend time at all," I said apologetically to the housekeeper, who unfortunately had just entered the room.

"Pooh! He isn't as innocent as he looks," she affirmed stoutly.

As time went on, Philip's stories grew apace. Finding me at first gullible, then interested to see what he would tell, he gained confidence as

I lost it, and his tales were simply marvels of imaginative skill.

The baby who figured sometimes as "he," sometimes as "she," we learned was wholly mythical, as were his sister and twin brother. His father, who "played in de tee-ay-ter," was also a shadowy image. His mother there was no getting around. People are bound to have mothers at some time of their existence, and Philip's was not yet dead.

The odd thing was that, although we proved that we knew his tales were pure fiction, he always stoutly maintained that they were true, and he never admitted to so much as stretching the truth even a trifle.

Among the stories which Philip was fond of relating, were many of the doings of his dog. That animal was described as "tarrier," pug, bull dog, "rat-an'-tan," and even as hound or mastiff if he felt that occasion demanded it. Indeed it is hard to imagine an occasion to which Philip's fancy could not rise with a dog of suitable dimensions. I was moderately certain by this time that no living dog realized Philip as master, but I took the pains to look the matter

up from mere curiosity. Of course I found that he had lied. His mother told me that he had never owned a dog of any sort. But believing that he would love a pet of that kind, I ascertained that there would be no domestic objection to his having a puppy, and I determined upon a plan to show the lad the shamefulness of lying and to teach him a lesson. So one day when he was due to call at our house on his regular peddling trip, I made sure that he had left home, and then sent to his house a funny, shaggy puppy, of nondescript breed, for which the freckled boy had paid the milkman ten cents, and which the cook indignantly refused to harbor.

As Philip was exhibiting his wares to me that day I artfully led the conversation to dogs in general and to his dog in particular. This time he called it a "tarrier" and said its name was Pompey, and his small face glowed with enthusiasm and love as he told of the animal's wonderful sagacity and its fondness for its master.

"Philip," said I gravely, "will you take me to your house and show me your dog?"

"*Sure!*" said the undaunted Philip.

I put on my hat slowly to give him an opportunity to back down, but he seemed willing and even eager to show me this canine prize which had meanwhile developed into a pug with bulldog characteristics.

As we went along I was divided between disgust at his falsehoods and wonder at his audacity. He was an enigma to me and I was curious to know how he would account for the presence of the puppy.

Of course I knew he was figuring upon pretending surprise and grief because his dog had disappeared, and I was secretly gloating upon my coming triumph and the small man's discomfiture.

Seeing us approach, his mother, who was ignorant of my ruse, opened the door and the pup came rolling down the steps.

Not a vestige of surprise showed in Philip's face as the dog came bounding toward us. With a look of mild rebuke he turned to me: "Dere, lady, dat's me dog. Hi, Pomp, come to Philip!" and in an instant those two small animals were rolling and tumbling together in glee, one just as irrepressible and irresponsible as the other.

And to my surprise and chagrin it was I — and not Philip — who was embarrassed, and I turned and came away, followed by the small boy's reproachful gaze.

Explain it? I cannot. I can only vouch for the fact that neither boy nor dog had ever seen each other until that minute. The subject has never been broached by Philip or me since.

He was here again the other day and he told me that he had decided upon his profession. I heartily approve his choice and shall give him what encouragement I can, for I feel sure that he must succeed in it. He is going to be a reporter for a daily paper.

CHAPTER XVIII

MICKEY'S CLINIC

FOLEY'S alley runs from behind our grocer's store to the back of the saloon at the corner. The freckled boy and I have not an extended acquaintance there, but we both know Mickey O'Brien, and a good little soul he is.

The other day the alley was in a state of great excitement. Frowsled heads were thrust from open windows and doors and untidy women were hanging over fences in earnest conversation, their curious glances centered upon Mrs. O'Brien's cottage.

At length the door of this little house opened and a goat came out, calmly chewing a boy's straw hat. As her little hoofs clattered down the steps and over the sidewalk they were quickly followed by the heavy tread of an irate female, who shrieked: "Arrah, now, catch the baste, somebody, do! It's Mickey's hat she's got, and him a-lookin' all over creation for the same this very minute."

There was a stampede toward the goat, who, with the coquettishness of her sex, would allow herself to be nearly caught, when, with a whisk of her impudent little tail, she would give a snort and dodge off quite out of reach.

The exciting chase was kept up for some minutes when Nanny, tired of fooling, turned on her tormentors in earnest and scattered them in a twinkling; for she was known to have a great deal of persuasion in her sharp little horns and she enforced her arguments by them in a very convincing manner.

Then, having come out victor, she magnanimously relinquished the spoils to the conquered, and dropping what remained of the hat, she trotted off with a wisp of the straw still hanging from her mouth.

Mrs. O'Brien made a grab at the hat and, shaking her fist at the retreating goat she called after her, " Oi'll be ayvin wid yez yet, ye thavin' bliggard ov a goat."

" Shure she druther ate straw hats nor petaty skins anny day. Faix, ye'll have to be fadin' her on dollar granebacks nixt," called out one of the women.

" And me Mickey'll have no hat at all to

wear to the claynic this day," moaned Mrs. O'Brien, wringing her hands in despair.

Whereupon there were heard from all sides offers of headgear of various shapes and sizes, and from this collection Mrs. O'Brien finally chose a large stiff felt hat because it looked newer than any of the rest, and not on account of its fitness for the occasion.

For poor Mickey had a club foot, so he had, and the doctors down at the hospital had told his mother that if she would bring him to one of their clinics they would perform an operation upon the deformed member that would make it quite as good as the other one; and this was the day set for the operation, which fact accounted for the unusual excitement and commotion in the alley.

There was a great deal of discussion going on over the subject, both pro and con. Mrs. Finn did not think much of hospitals, and she declared that she had heard that " the doctors there had made a mishtake and cut the wrong leg intirely off a man, he bein' wake in the head an' too scared to tell thim that they was cuttin' the wrong wan." But she added that it was no more than justice to say that this was only hear-

say and that she did not know how true it was.

Mrs. Dooley spoke from experience, and her testimony —" a claner and nater place nor a more dacent set av people wuz not in this wurruld "— had its weight. She had been there once to see a friend, and, although the friend had died, she " laid it to nobudy's dure, whatever."

Old Man Rooney had just taken his pipe from his mouth to give his opinion, when the door of the O'Brien cottage opened again and Mrs. O'Brien stalked out, brave in a flowery bonnet with wide green ribbons; and beside her limped Mickey, his freckled face half hidden by the borrowed hat, which, but for his ears, would have rested on his shoulders.

As they started off they were followed by the good wishes of the community. " Good luck to yez, Mickey," called one. " May the saints be wid you," cried another, as the pair turned the corner and vanished from sight.

Mickey's heart beat very fast as he was led into the lecture-room and was told that they were going to remove a part of the scaphoid bone, whatever that might be.

A class of young lady students was there, notebooks in hand, to see how the thing was done. Fifty pairs of eyes were focused upon one spot, and fifty pencils were poised in air, waiting to write down what was going to happen to Mickey O'Brien — for there was no telling how many times a day they might be called upon to remove scaphoid bones, you know, in a few years.

Mickey, brave lad, was going to bear it without the influence of chloroform or other anæsthetic, because the doctors feared for his poor little heart or lungs, or whatever it is that the chloroform acts upon when it sends one into the sleep from which he never wakes.

There were a great many people in the room, it seemed to Mickey. There was his mother, who was going to stand by him and hold his hand, for the doctor had said that she might if she would be very calm and not cry or do anything that would excite the little fellow; and there was the doctor with his two assistants, one, a sweet-faced lady who seemed to know just what to do to make the patients comfortable, and the other, a short-haired woman with rosy cheeks, who seemed to know exactly how

to make the doctor comfortable — for she handed him his instruments, the bandages, the basin, and sponge each at precisely the moment it was needed.

Then there were the lady students, a bright-looking lot of girls, young and pretty for the most part, and as Mickey looked up at these girls, sitting tier above tier, in a half circle, about him, he blushed because of his little bare legs. For Mickey was fourteen now and he had been taught to be very modest, and really it seemed to him that all this exposure of naked limbs was quite as hard as the pain of the operation.

The doctor lifted him gently and laid him on the operating table, the sweet-faced lady placed the pillows where they supported him best, and the word was given that all was ready.

The pencils flew over the pages of the note-books and the young ladies wrote that the doctor had begun by making a free incision to the bone on the outer side of the foot, and that he had removed a portion of the scaphoid bone to allow the straightening of the foot, after which the foot was bandaged with splints; but

of course this was all written with a bewildering number of terms that would be Greek to you and me.

They did not write that Mickey had bitten his tongue almost through to keep from screaming with the pain and that he had prayed in his heart to the Virgin that his mother might be helped to bear it all, with never a thought for himself. They did not write that his mother's white lips had been whispering aves and paternosters from the time she first caught sight of the doctor's sharp knives.

But they did write that it was a most successful operation and that there was every reason to believe that the foot would mend in time and be quite as good as the other one.

And when it was all over, the kind doctor took little Mickey in his arms and carried him to his carriage, where he placed him gently in his mother's lap, and taking Mrs. O'Brien's number, he told the coachman to drive very carefully to her home.

Mrs. O'Brien held her head very high and looked neither to the right nor the left as the doctor's carriage rolled into Foley's alley. In-

deed, so set up was she by her ride behind the handsome bays that she marched into the house without exchanging a word with the women who stood with expectant faces on the walk waiting to hear about it.

The coachman carried Mickey into the house and laid him on the bed, and the little fellow, tired from pain and excitement, soon fell asleep. Then it was that Mrs. O'Brien, having no one to talk to, went out and sat upon her front doorstep, ostensibly to get the air, but in reality to get a chance to tell her neighbors all about it. And filled with curiosity they came, one by one, to inquire what had been done to the lad.

"Why, ye see," said Mickey's mother, "Mickey he had a rale skay-fyed bone in the small av his foot, and he had it removed by wan av the foinest cuttin' docthors in the city. Thim bones is layable to come on any wan's fut. Mickey's wuz on his roight fut, but they bees jist as often on the left wan."

"An' kin the bye rin and lep now, and won't he go halt no more?" asked Mrs. Finn.

"Dade he kin rin wid the best av thim whin his fut bees healed. But Oi must go and git a bit of supper fer me an' the bye; ridin' in a

kerridge is great fur givin' wan the kane appetite."

And the women all nodded and said gravely, "That's very thrue."

CHAPTER XIX

IF THEY SAW A BURGLAR

IT was one day last winter and there were three very small boys and they were talking together. I recognized them as the freckled boy and Willie and Ned. They had dug a large, square hole in the ground in a vacant lot, near to the sidewalk, and in this they had built a fire of shavings and blocks, and they sat about with their feet to the blaze.

They were not poor nor were they poorly dressed. Every one of them had a warm furnace fire at home and there wasn't one of them who would not have set up a loud wail had he been compelled for five minutes to sit out of doors and warm himself at so meager a blaze upon that cold day.

Their teeth chattered a little, but they snuggled up close together and told each other that it was bully — so much warmer than in the house — and they wondered why it was that furnaces gave so little heat.

And as they sat and kicked their small heels with great vigor to keep them from becoming frost-bitten, they discussed the best way of dealing immediate and summary justice to a burglar caught in the act of plundering. The smallest boy said that he would push the offender into a closet and lock him in, then he would run and turn in the fire-alarm himself — there was no use waiting for a policeman.

The next smallest boy was for tying the culprit with a long rope which he kept hidden under his bed for just such emergencies, and when he had him well tied, he would go and call his father. But he added, sadly, that as likely as not he couldn't find the rope when he wanted it, for the hired girl was always stealing it. She said that he had cut it off from her clothes-line, which was a lie, for it was a jumping-rope which he had hooked from his sister and cut the handle off of.

And all the boys agreed that hired girls were mean, cross things, and they would just as soon tell lies as not, and that they just loved to get boys licked, and so they laid everything off onto them.

Then the freckled boy resumed the original

subject and said that if *he* ever met a burglar he wouldn't even stop to tie him up nor call the police. He would just walk up and hit him one in the snoot; he rather thought that that would be enough for Mr. Burglar.

And the other boys looked admiringly at the freckled boy and each felt that his own scheme had been mean and cowardly compared to this one, and each wondered why he hadn't thought of that himself, for, of course, anyone could see that that was the quickest and easiest way.

Since then the freckled boy has really had an experience with a burglar and I am bound to say that he bore himself well, although not exactly in the manner which he had described.

He says that when we go back to the country, he thinks that I would better let him sleep over at my house on a lounge in the hall. He doesn't think that it is safe to have no man in the house, and he is sure that his mother wouldn't mind, because she has his father to protect her.

He tells me that this coming summer is going to be a very bad one for robberies and that people should take every precaution against thieves. I think that it was the Chief of Police

If he ever met a burglar, he would just walk up and hit him one in the snoot!

who told him this, or perhaps it may have been his lieutenant. The freckled boy is extremely intimate with both of them.

It was early this Spring that the event happened which made the freckled boy for a few days famous. You may have seen his picture in the newspapers at the time. To be sure, it looked very like the cut of the lost Charley Ross, and the freckled boy was never known to wear his hair in that style before he saw the picture, but all the fellows said that it was a splendid likeness.

Since then, although it is not after the fashion of the present day, the freckled boy has combed his hair like that of the boy in the woodcut. He says that he thinks he ought to, so that people will know him.

You see, it was like this — the freckled boy was getting ready for bed one night with his light turned off. His room is at the back of the house and he likes to undress in the dark because then he can hang out of the window in dishabille and nobody can see that he is undressed.

That particular evening it was quite dark

and cloudy and as he stood at the window he distinctly saw a man open the alley gate and come up the back walk.

He had just got into his night-gown, which was lucky for him. He is going to tease his mother to let him sleep this summer in his shirt and drawers. He says that it is safer. He has explained to me that in putting on a night-gown, there is one point at which you are entirely at a burglar's mercy. It is just as you put it over your head, while your arms are up and your eyes are covered.

If his mother will not let him sleep in his underclothes he is going to have her fix his night-gowns so that he can get into them as he does his coat, and thus he can be ever on the alert.

But there! I haven't told you what the freckled boy did, after all. Why, he screamed out of the back window for somebody to call for the police. Somebody did, and they caught the man. He had not stolen anything and it turned out that he was the cook's brother and that he always came in that way — but that is neither here nor there — for if it *hadn't* been the cook's brother and the man *had* broken into

the house, there is no telling what might have happened.

When the freckled boy is a man, he is coming to the city and going to be the Chief of Police. All the fellows have promised to vote for him.

CHAPTER XX

THE ALLEY-GORA CAT

THE freckled boy has had another pet. It was given to him by a strange man who was carrying it in a covered basket. The man said that he was looking for a home for a beautiful pussy-cat and that the moment his eyes fell upon the freckled boy he knew that he was a good child and he decided to give the cat to him.

The freckled boy thanked the man and the man smiled very kindly and told him not to mention it. Then the man sat down on the horse-block and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief and fanned himself with his hat. He took a city map out of his pocket and looked at it and the freckled boy heard him say, *"Seventeen miles and three lines of street cars. It's a cinch this time!"*

The man then patted the freckled boy's head and told him that he had always found that red-headed little boys were very kind to animals and

that was why he was giving him this nice pet. The man said that the cat was a full-blooded *Alley-gora* cat.

After the man started to go, he turned back and put a silver dollar in the freckled boy's hand. He said it was *conscience-money*. The freckled boy knows what conscience is but he cannot understand what conscience-money can be. He told me that he had conscience once. It happened one time when he was visiting his grandparents and he was very anxious to attend a picnic.

While his grandfather's back was turned, he pushed the indicator of the barometer around so it pointed to Fair Weather. It had stood directly at Rain. His grandmother let him go to the picnic and he got very wet and the next day he had a sore throat. His grandfather was awfully put out because his barometer had gone wrong. He said that he had harvested by that barometer for years and it had never lied before. After that the freckled boy confessed to his grandmother. While he was telling her, his throat pained him terribly. His grandmother said that his conscience was hurting him and she made him gargle for it. The

gargle was awfully nasty. It puckered his throat all up, but he felt a lot better afterward.

Now the freckled boy has been taught never to accept gifts of money from anyone and he says that he would have run after the man to give him back the dollar only he had a sore toe, and then too, he felt that he ought not to leave the cat alone. Anyhow the man ran awfully fast and jumped on a street car and was out of sight in about half a second.

I cannot say that the cat was given a very warm welcome. The cook took an unreasonable prejudice against it and even I found it an unprepossessing cat. It stole the cream regularly and once it got its head stuck in the cream jug and, hearing the cook coming, it jumped from the table to the floor and scampered, jug and all, across the kitchen, where it hit the stove and broke the jug into a dozen pieces.

It also made greasy tracks all over the drawing room rugs. The freckled boy had been smearing its feet with butter at the time so that the cat would never want to run away. The milk-man advised him to do this. As we bought both our butter and extra milk for the cat daily from this same milk-man, one could scarcely feel

that his interest was strictly impersonal. The cat also tramped down the neighbors' flower beds, and it caught and killed the innocent little birds which unwarily came to bathe in the spray of the revolving lawn sprinkler. But the very worst thing that it did was to howl at night. I believe that never was there another cat with such a voice. In spite of our united efforts to keep him indoors he would manage to escape and, sitting on our alley fence, he would render his nocturnal serenade night after night.

In the morning, after such a concert, we would find the back yard filled with votive offerings hurled from the neighboring windows. Stones, flower-pots and old shoes were then hastily gathered up by the freckled boy and stealthily dumped into our garbage can. Once he found a whole brick of maple sugar. The freckled boy says that the kids ate all that they could chisel off of it and then he traded it off to Philip for an odd suspender out of his pack. Philip had lost its mate and could not hope to make a sale, so the transaction was velvet to him.

The freckled boy cut up the suspender and made it into a harness for the cat; but when he put it on her, the poor thing was so frightened

that she had a fit and ran up the wall of the kitchen and knocked the cook's alarm clock off the shelf, injuring the works to such an extent that cook *overslept herself* for a whole hour the next morning.

However this was more easily condoned by the cook than was a later happening. The freckled boy put the cat in one of his rubber boots and stuffed cook's little knitted shoulder shawl into the top to keep it from getting out. It would seem from the cook's complaint that the scent of rubber is one of the most odious in the world, and the hardest to get out of woolen garments. Personally, I hold that a rubbery smell is to a moth-ball odor as one is to twenty; but since cook is devoted to moth balls, we dropped the subject, and the freckled boy spent fifteen cents of his dollar for a bottle of perfume which now graces the cook's dresser. He says that the druggist told him that *ody* cologne was the strongest thing you could get for your money, and when he told the druggist what he wanted it for, the druggist threw in a little musk at the same price.

The remainder of his dollar the freckled boy spent in what seemed to him the acme of self-

immolation. The sermon on Sunday had been on doing things to make others happy, and on Monday the freckled boy asked me if I supposed that their mothers would allow him to take Kathryn and Eva May to the park for the day.

This was indeed an unprecedented request, for, usually, any suggestion to invite these small girls to join us on a festive occasion met with violent protest from the freckled boy. No young gentleman of eight is voluntarily going to assume the responsibility of escorting to the park two younger ladies, and especially two such as Kathryn and Eva May, without some idea of self-sacrifice.

These little girls are five, and although Kathryn is but eleven days older than Eva May, she is considerably larger and is what the freckled boy designates as a husky kid. She certainly is a fine, normal child, with the beauty of wholesomeness and good nature and with an inquiring mind; and her opinions are drawn from her own observations.

Eva May is a beauty. She is a dainty flower-faced little creature, all pink and white and golden hair, and she looks like a small tinted saint. She has the loveliest manners and the

sweetest little Southern drawl and accent. She, too, has a mind, and she speaks it with a vehemence which her gentle face belies.

You see, both girls live within a stone's throw of the park, else this excursion had never been. In fact it took quite a good deal of reassuring upon my part before these careful mothers consented to entrust their offspring to the freckled boy's care — but in time the thing was achieved.

The freckled boy agreed to keep in touch with me by 'phone from time to time during the day — so it was that I knew just when he reached Kathryn's house and also the particular minute when he was leaving Eva May's home with his two guests. Moreover, I was called upon in several instances during the day to arbitrate and to advise. For instance there came a time when Kathryn, having already been treated to two pony rides, refused to dismount, and set up a clamor for another ride. Inasmuch as the freckled boy had to spend a nickel to telephone, it seemed to me that it would have been about as cheap to give Kathryn the other ride. But he felt that discipline must be maintained. He asked me if, in case the little girls refused to do what he told them to, he would better call a

policeman; he said there were a lot of policemen in the park and none of them seemed very busy. I told him that it was considered rather bad form to call the police for ladies whom one was escorting, and advised him to be patient with the little girls. Then he asked me the time. He said Eva May had tried to open his watch with a hair-pin which she picked up and had broken the hour-hand off. He added that he supposed it must be pretty late for it seemed to him that they had been in the park for about a week. Then he wanted me to listen to see if I could hear Kathryn hollering, but I had to confess that familiar as I am with Kathryn's wail, I could not pick it out from all the babel of sound.

At another time he called me up to say that Kathryn had climbed into one of the great garbage baskets set about to catch the waste paper in the park. He had fished her out with great difficulty, she kicking and scratching meanwhile. She had climbed into the basket to look for *coupons*. They come on candy boxes. She had heard a woman say that you can buy furniture with them and she thought that she would get something for her mother.

When the freckled boy got home he told me

that he had spent the whole day and all his money entirely for others. He seemed very proud of the fact that he had derived no pleasure from it himself. He told me that he was greatly embarrassed several times, but that the little girls really are very cunning. When they came to the stork's pen, Kathryn called, "Please, Stork, bring me a little sister," and the stork came and put his head up close to the bars and stood quite still as though he were listening. Then Eva May said the same thing and the stork nodded as if to say *yes*. This made Kathryn angry and she pushed Eva May very rudely and said that it wasn't fair, because Eva May already had a little brother while Kathryn had nobody at all to play with. Then both children began to sing out, "Stork, bring *me* a baby sister! Stork, bring me a baby sister!" until everybody around them was laughing.

When Eva May knelt down by the flower-bed and kissed the little pansy faces, a man who was standing near said that she looked like an angel; but Kathryn said, "Look! your knees are all muddy! *You'll* get a scolding!" Afterward, in the animal house, Eva May stood in front

of the biggest lion in the cage and, sticking out her tongue at him, she said, "*Aw, you great big Mutt!*" in an awfully rough tone. The freckled boy cannot imagine where she ever picked up such words. And if you'll believe it, there stood the very same man who had seen Eva May at the flower-bed, and he said, "This *can't* be the same little girl I saw kissing the pansies," and Kathryn spoke up quickly and said, "Yes, it *is*, and she is going to get a spanking to-night, too." The freckled boy says Kathryn always is horning-in just like that.

The freckled boy was so engrossed in looking after the little girls that he quite forgot to ask his friend, the animal-keeper, if he wanted his cat for the park collection. He looked at a list of the animals there and he found several varieties of cats, but there were no *Alley-goras* among them.

On the whole it is just as well, because nobody ever has seen the cat since that day. Shortly after this a small boy brought to the door a basket, to the inside of which was securely sewed a large flat-iron. The boy said that he had found it down by the lake. I insisted that it could not be ours, but he pointed to the handle where our

street number, half obliterated by water, was still discernible. The freckled boy is sure that he has seen just such a basket in the cook's room, and the flat-iron certainly is like those standing in the laundry. But pooh! *anybody* might have a basket like that, and flat-irons are flat-irons the world over.

CHAPTER XXI

A LITTLE RITUALIST

SINCE the freckled boy has belonged to the boy-choir — he joined it last winter when some of the other fellows did — he has become a little bit clannish in his friendships.

Although he is on good enough terms with all the boys, still there has been a tendency to confine his intimacies to the choir-boys and to those who go to his church.

He says that he used to just hate it when Sunday came, before he sang in the choir, but that now it is quite different. He used to think that the sermons were awfully long and dry, but now he doesn't mind at all. He tells me that in his last Sunday's sermon, the minister said, "Our Creator" forty-nine times, and "this, thy servant," forty-six times. He had it forty-six, but the boy next him only had it forty-five. He thinks that the other boy's score-card was wrong.

He tells me that the Lord's prayer contains seventy-two words; and the Apostles' Creed one hundred and nine words, counting the amens.

About half of the fellows don't count amen. They say that it isn't a word at all and only just means that you've got through.

The Psalter has a good many hard words in it. The freckled boy pronounces it the Pasawlter. He likes best, *"Why do the heathen so furiously rage together?"* He thinks that it would make a nice text. Some of the boys can remember the text, but the freckled boy can't.

At first he was awfully frightened and he used to stumble whenever he marched in, but now he hardly ever does. Sometimes he does, though, when a girl looks at him. It is only *one* girl whom he minds, the rest don't bother him at all. He says that this is a very pretty girl and that she sits in the middle aisle. I think that I know the one he means. She has big black eyes and carries a perky little prayer-book bound in red leather.

The freckled boy felt silly in his surplice at first. The boys call them nighties when nobody is around. At first he didn't sing a bit. He

made his mouth go so as to look like the rest, but he didn't make any noise. That was because he was scared. He wanted to know if I could tell from where I sat that he wasn't really singing.

One of the other choir boys sings beautifully. The freckled boy says that when this boy sings a solo, the fellows all feel like crying. All but one boy; that boy just sits and grins. All the same, his nose gets red and snuffly and the fellows can see that he just pretends. He thinks that it is smart not to care about things. Once a little school-mate died and he said he didn't care a bit, but the freckled boy found him afterward in the coal-shed and he was crying awfully. He told the freckled boy that he would split his head open if he ever told anybody.

The freckled boy says that he knows that it is wrong to feel proud, but he can't help feeling glad that he is a Piscable. He says that if he were a Catholic or a Baptist he would probably feel the same way about that. Still, he is glad that he isn't a Baptist because they baptize in deep water.

He is very sorry that his father and mother

were not to be here, for he would like to have had them see the Easter services. "Our service at Easter-tied," is the way he wrote it in his last letter.

They will not come home until next month, and then we will all go home together. I cannot say that I shall be sorry to go, although the freckled boy and I have been really happy here; and except for poor Jimsey's death, we have had nothing of sadness during our stay.

Still, one's own home is the best place, after all, and the freckled boy is growing anxious to see his old friends. He is going to get the rector at home to establish a boy-choir the first thing when he gets back.

He asked me if I suppose that the boys will notice that he has grown any, and he confided to me that he can feel something on his face that feels like whiskers.

He hopes he has grown more than Dan has. He bought a present to take to the little girl at home whom he likes best, but he met the other girl — the one who sits in the middle aisle — and he gave it to her. He is going to get another one for the girl at home. He cannot decide which girl he likes best. This one

is the prettiest, but he has known the other one the longest.

The freckled boy says that when he grows up, he is going to be a clergyman.

CHAPTER XXII

SOME CAVE-DWELLERS

THERE is a colony of cave-dwellers under my back porch. I take a deep interest in these odd little beings, and as they belong to a race comparatively unknown, I have decided to prepare a paper upon their habits and customs as I have observed them from my window, which overlooks their haunt.

I can scarcely claim the right to call myself their discoverer, for my attention was first directed to them by the cook, who spoke of them as "pests"— a word which she usually applies to small insects and dogs with muddy feet. I immediately gave orders that these strange creatures were not to be disturbed, and from my observations and attentive study I have found them to be as follows:

There are in all, five of them, all males. They average in height about four feet. The shape of their skulls is neither flat nor pointed, nor does it differ materially from that of the

ordinary American small boy. Neither are these small creatures in any way as uncouth as from their names one might expect. Their legs are remarkably straight and well-shaped and their movements are agile and quick.

Their bodies, instead of being wrapped wholly in skins, are first covered with cloth made from the wool of sheep, carded and woven and cut into garments of modern fashion; over these are worn skins of the mountain goat, the buffalo and the fox, and one wears an ample drapery made from the skins of gray squirrels, sewn together into a shape which bears a marked resemblance to the lining of one of the silk circulars in vogue some years ago.

The entrance to the small, low enclosure beneath my porch, is something over four feet high, yet the cave-dwellers always crawl in upon their stomachs and drag their spoils in after them. Their spoils are usually carried in small paper bags, and from an examination of traces left in the cave, I find that they are of a sweet, sticky nature. I have also found in the cave at various times divers small bags made from a heavy striped cloth known to us as bed-ticking, and containing many little round balls of baked

clay or of bright colored glass; these I take to be a sort of coin, current among them.

The voices of the cave-dwellers are peculiar; sometimes deep and guttural, then again, nasal and shrill. When a voice is shrill it is as though the speaker had forgotten himself in a moment of excitement and he is immediately reprimanded by one who seems to be the chief, in words which I can only write by imitating the sound as best I can: "You-gry shu-gry u-gry." The culprit then changes his voice almost to a whisper and grunts a reply in tones too deep for me to catch. Indeed, it is a strange language which they speak, and unintelligible to us, and it is spoken with many signs and grunts and whispers.

In their councils the cave-dwellers sit upon the ground in a circle with their chins resting upon their knees. It is their custom that the oldest shall speak first. I have gathered from words and signs that he of the squirrel-skin garment is older by four days than he who stands taller than he, and I have, moreover, discovered that the taller one considers this no fair. But the tall one has the best of it in the matter of di-

viding the booty, for his share is the greatest of all.

There is sometimes following, and attached by means of a frayed rope to the smallest cave-dweller, an animal, yellow in color, sheepish in manner and mongrel in species. This animal has four legs but never seems to use but three of them at a time.

During the convening of the council the animal has been known to slyly take sundry licks at the sweet, sticky stuff, before mentioned, so that delicacy was reduced to a treacley mass. When this thing occurred, I have seen that the chief has not only kicked the animal, but has also pinched the body of the small creature to which the animal was attached.

Where these odd creatures stay at night I have not yet been able to determine, for no sooner have they crawled upon all-fours from the cave entrance to the alley fence, than, scrambling over, they rise to their feet and run, some in one direction, some in another, with such incredible swiftness that the eye can scarcely discern their flight.

Now although this account seems meager and

ill-told, it has taken me some months to discover even so much of their habits, for the cave-dweller is very shy, and one must exercise the utmost care in keeping out of sight while watching and studying him.

I am finishing this paper upon Monday of Easter week, and I did yesterday morning make a most important discovery concerning the strange little people of whom I write.

For I saw them standing — all five of them — in a great beautiful church, where there were tall Easter lilies and sweet music. Their furs and skins had been discarded for snowy white surplices and they held hymnals in their hands. Their voices were neither guttural nor shrill now but very sweet and clear as they sang:

"He is risen! He is risen!
Tell it with a joyful voice."

And the glorious spring sunshine streaming through the stained glass windows fell in a golden glow upon their earnest little faces and gave them an aspect so different from that lent by the dim light of the cave, that I was almost startled.

And I made the last note of my impressions about the cave-dwellers upon the fly-leaf of my prayer-book, thus: "Truly there is, withal, something cherubic about these queer little folk."

CHAPTER XXIII

GOOD-BYE

OUR travelers have come at last. Everybody has been hugged and kissed a dozen times and there have been mutual congratulations upon each one's evident good health and spirits.

Gifts have been given and accepted and trunks have been unpacked and repacked, and to-day we go back to the old quiet life.

The freckled boy wished his father to meet some of his boy-friends and a small group of them are now standing in front of the house. These are the same boys who last week, clad in brand-new soldier suits of blue-jean, decorated with indiscriminate stripes and emblems, comprised a company of *Millisher*.

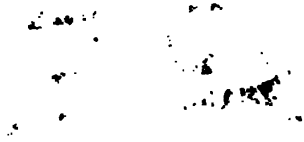
Surveying them dispassionately to-day, one's first thought is that little can be said in favor of the bravest of blue-jean soldier-suits, once it has capitulated to a laundry.

A closer observation discloses upon several of the boys abnormal bumps about the torso and a general look of lumpiness beneath their clothing. On condition of secrecy, the freckled boy offered to put me next, but I am sure that he will forgive me if I now pass this information on to you. It is the life preservers which his men wear that gives them this unusual appearance.

These life preservers are made by stuffing a long stocking full of corks, and tying it about the body. The most of the stockings were furnished by the Perry boy, who has a very tall sister. From the little glimmer of new tan-colored silk hose which I can see through some of the boys' jackets, I surmise that sister's offering was not a *voluntary* one, and I scent trouble in the Perry household later on. Also, I am wondering where in a dry district like this, the boys ever could have collected all those corks, but it is not up to me to investigate at this late hour, for the freckled boy is just bidding his friends good-bye.

There is a touch of pathos in his farewell, for, I hear him now, telling them that they probably never will see him again; because when

he is a man, he is going to be a sea-captain and it is not at all likely that he will ever stop on shore long enough to get this far inland. He says that after he has been a captain for a while, he will probably be made a *Commy-door.*



THE END